

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Committee for Official Statistics

Minutes

**Meeting of Tuesday 11 September 2012
Board Room, Drummond Gate, London**

Present

Members

Professor David Rhind (Chair)
Mr Andrew Dilnot
Mr Richard Alldritt
Dr Colette Bowe
Professor Angela Dale
Professor David Hand
Ms Jil Matheson

Secretariat

Mr Rob Bumpstead
Mr Joe Cuddeford

Other Attendees

Mr Iain Bell (for item 3)
Mr Mark Pont (for items 4 and 5)
Mr Paul Jackson (for item 6)
Ms Pam Davies and Mr David Freeman (for item 9)

Apologies

Dr Norman Caven
Mr Partha Dasgupta

Declarations of Interest

None

1 Minutes and Matters Arising

- 1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record. The Chair noted and welcomed that Mr Dasgupta had joined the Committee as a non-executive member.
- 1.2 In relation to paragraph 3.3 of the minutes, regarding Open Data, the Committee heard that a paper on developments would be provided for the next meeting.
- 1.3 Following an action from the last meeting, the secretariat had met with staff from the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) to discuss options for further communication and engagement between non-executive directors and the RSS. Regular updates would be circulated to Non-Executive Directors containing information about potential engagement opportunities and events.
- 1.4 It was confirmed that another meeting between the COS and the RSS would be scheduled for 2013.

Action: Secretariat to schedule meeting with RSS for 2013.

- 1.5 The meeting noted that an action from the last meeting, for the National Statistician's Office to consider amendments to the Inter-Administration Working Agreement in light of discussion, would be considered as part of the next annual review of the Working Agreement in early 2013. The National Statistician explained that that the IAC (Inter-Administration Committee) only met three times per year.
- 1.6 The meeting understood that a proposal for a Monitoring Brief about statistical compendia was included on the forward work plan.

2 Activities of the Government Statistical Service [SA(COS)(12)20]

- 2.1 Ms Matheson summarised the Government's plans for Civil Service Reform as they related to statisticians and the analytic professions. The meeting heard that there was political commitment to the changes, which departments were expected to implement quickly. The plans included reform of the professions, a part of which was to increase the recognition of statisticians within departments, for example in performance management. Raising the profile and influence of statisticians would present an additional responsibility for Heads of Profession. Ms Matheson and Dr Bowe agreed to further discuss this issue.
- 2.2 The Government Statistical Service (GSS) competency framework had been updated to include skills such as influencing. Recruitment bans had been lifted for statisticians in most departments; however some departments were reporting difficulties in attracting suitable applicants. It was suggested that this may be due to the large number of attractive job opportunities outside government for graduates with statistical skills. It was agreed that COS should return to issues of recruitment, competencies and career development at a future meeting.

Action: Secretariat to schedule a discussion of recruitment, competencies and career development of statisticians for a future meeting of COS.

- 2.3 Ms Matheson reported that her office was currently making amendments to the draft review of housing market statistics in light of comments received from members of the Committee via correspondence. It was noted that the review did not include an implementation plan or

timetable. The meeting understood that the findings in the report were directed towards the producer departments, which would be responding to the conclusions after publication.

- 2.4 The membership of the Project Steering Group was noted. It was agreed that a short briefing note about the consultation, the process followed and the people consulted should be drafted and circulated to COS, to provide assurance of the extent of engagement beyond Government. A list of those consulted would appear in the report.

Action: National Statistician's Office to provide a briefing note to COS.

3 The future of the National Statistics Publication Hub [SA(COS)(12)21]

- 3.1 Mr Bell introduced a paper on possible options for the future of the National Statistics Publication Hub. The websites of five government departments would be migrating to a single government domain (www.gov.uk) in November 2012 and other departments (excluding the Authority, ONS and the devolved administrations) would follow by March 2013. Alongside this, the GSS Presentation and Dissemination Committee had been reviewing the Publication Hub.
- 3.2 The Committee considered the potential opportunities and risks of asking the Government Digital Service (GDS) to develop a system to replace the Publication Hub. The following points were made in the discussion.
- i. Whatever solution was agreed upon, it would be important to ensure that the independence of official statistics was safeguarded. The current Publication Hub had the advantage of releasing statistics separately from ministerial statements and policy documents.
 - ii. One benefit of the Publication Hub over the system that existed previously was that users could find statistics relevant to them without knowing which government department produced them. However, there was some evidence that users were not satisfied with the accessibility of the Publication Hub.
 - iii. The central government website would not initially be capable of hosting certain content, such as the NOMIS site, Neighbourhood Statistics and data visualisation techniques generally. These could however be linked to from the central site.
 - iv. The lessons from the Publication Hub should be learnt, and not replicated in a future system. Whatever system was adopted it should continue to be invested in, updated and developed.
 - v. The GSS published a large amount of time critical content, and any new system should provide assurance in this regard.
 - vi. The Tridion content management system used by the Publication Hub was not popular to use among some GSS staff who found it onerous.
 - vii. Advantages of the proposal were that GDS had staff highly skilled in this area and were prepared to bear the costs involved
- 3.3 The Committee agreed that all options should continue to be explored. It was agreed that a further report on progress and a demonstration would be provided to the Committee when these were ready. It was further agreed that statistics on usage of the Publication Hub should be provided to the Committee.

Action: Secretariat to schedule further discussion of the future of the Publication Hub.

Action: Secretariat to circulate usage statistics for the Publication Hub.

4 Monitoring Report: The Assessment of UK Official Statistics 2009 to 2012 [SA(COS)(11)22]

4.1 Mr Alldritt introduced a Monitoring Report on the Assessment of UK Official Statistics 2009 to 2012. The report had been published on the Authority website in August. Copies of the report, with a covering letter from the Authority Chair, had been sent to the Chair of the Public Administration Select Committee, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Ministers in Devolved Administrations, the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Statistics, and the President of the RSS.

4.2 The following suggestions were made for further dissemination of the report:

- i. the issue raised at paragraph 11, regarding what a modern statistical service should look like, could be the topic of a paper for discussion at a meeting held by the RSS;
- ii. the report could be summarised in a paper for the next the International Statistical Institutes conference to be held in Hong Kong in 2013;
- iii. the report could be sent to the Institute for Government, or form the basis for a seminar there;
- iv. the report could be referred to at the upcoming meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Statistics;
- v. the United Nations would be reviewing its Fundamental Principles for Statistics and the report could be used to inform that exercise; and
- vi. the report could also be drawn to the attention of Eurostat, given recent developments there.

4.3 It was agreed that the Head of Assessment would design a campaign to publicise the important messages contained within the report.

Action: Head of Assessment to design a campaign to publicise the messages within the Monitoring Report on the Assessment of UK Official Statistics 2009 to 2012.

5 Draft Monitoring Brief: Statistics about the future [SA(COS)(12)26]

5.1 Mr Alldritt introduced an early draft Monitoring Brief on projections and forecasts. The draft Brief identified a range of projections and forecasts, some of which were labelled as official statistics, and some as National Statistics. Broadly, projections were clearly part of the official statistics agenda, while forecasts were beyond that remit. However, there was a grey area of outputs which sat between these categories.

5.2 The meeting considered the draft recommendations of the report, the user need for a compendium of statistics about the future, and whether such work should be seen as a priority in relation to other commitments. Bringing projections together in one volume could be problematic in that they would be mutually inconsistent by design.

5.3 A potential 'inventory' of all official projections and forecasts was considered. The meeting discussed how far such an exercise should comment on forecasts by HM Treasury and the Office for Budget Responsibility, which incorporated judgements about the future effects of government policy.

5.4 It was suggested that the basis on which projections were compiled – for example population projections, which were clearly National Statistics – was not very widely understood and the Monitoring Brief could usefully address this issue.

Action: Head of Assessment to revise Monitoring Brief on statistics about the future and provide to the next meeting.

6 UK compliance with EU statistical legislation [SA(COS)(12)23]

- 6.1 Mr Jackson introduced a paper on the risks of non-compliance with EU statistical regulations and the management of these risks across the GSS. The UK had received formal pre-infraction correspondence with the European Commission (EC) on compliance issues in four areas.
- 6.2 The meeting considered whether there was a role for the Authority's independent scrutiny function in potential cases of non-compliance. It was agreed that scrutiny did not have a role by default, but there may be cases where some investigation could be appropriate. It was agreed that the National Statistician would provide the Committee with an annual update on any changes to EU requirements, resource implications, and risks of non-compliance.

Action: Secretariat to schedule annual updates to COS from the National Statistician on UK compliance with EU statistical legislation.

7 Recording and dealing with breaches of the Code of Practice [SA(COS)(12)24]

- 7.1 Ms Matheson outlined proposals to revise the arrangements for reporting and dealing with breaches of the Code of Practice. The Committee heard that the changes were in part a response to previous confusion caused by the concept of 'non-reportable breaches'. The new guidance did not include this term and was clearer. It also clarified that the guidance related to all official statistics and not just those designated as National Statistics.
- 7.2 The Committee agreed that:
- i. the final sentence of the first paragraph did not add substantively to the document and should be removed;
 - ii. the breaches listed at paragraph 2 were all related to release practices and the document should therefore be renamed to reflect this; and
 - iii. the National Statistician should be informed as soon as any breach is discovered, rather than after a public statement is made about the breach, and this should be clarified at paragraph 4.
- 7.3 The Committee agreed that the guidance should be revised in light of the above points and provided for formal approval to the next meeting of the Authority Board.

Action: National Statistician to revise guidance and provide to Authority Board.

8 Good Practice Team

- 8.1 Ms Matheson outlined a new initiative, previously known as the 'helpers' project, which was being set up in response to signals from producer departments that they would welcome additional assistance with improving statistical communication and user engagement. Four staff would work on an initial pilot for six months from October, with an interim evaluation report produced after the first three months.
- 8.2 The initiative was jointly steered by the National Statistician and the Head of Assessment. To safeguard against potential conflicts of interest, the operational management was with the National Statistician's Office rather than the Monitoring and Assessment team.

- 8.3 The Committee considered whether the initiative could make a positive impact, given the short time period it had been given. It was confirmed that the scope of the pilot would be clearly defined, and the team would focus on a limited number of activities. There would be an option to extend the work beyond the six months if it was deemed a worthwhile use of resources. It was agreed that an evaluation plan for the pilot project would be provided to the next meeting of COS, together with an update on progress.

Action: National Statistician to provide an evaluation plan to the Committee.

9 Developments with the National Statistics Theme Groups and an update from the Labour Market Statistics Theme [SA(COS)(12)25]

- 9.1 Ms Davies introduced a paper which outlined work to re-energise the National Statistics Theme Groups, with the aim of improving the coordination of statistical activity across departments. The meeting heard that while some Themes worked well, others were not as effective.
- 9.2 The Committee considered the possible reasons for previous ineffectiveness, and sought reassurance that the changes would lead to improvements. The meeting heard that the National Statistician's Office would be providing some resource to help lead the Themes, that an increasing focus on user engagement meant Themes were now more relevant, and, that in a climate of expenditure reductions producers understood the need and value of more collaboration. Themes were more effective where their aims were aligned with what their members were capable of delivering.
- 9.3 Mr Freeman summarised the recent work of the Labour Market Statistics Theme. While the Theme Group had no decision-making powers, it could be influential. Its purpose was well defined and while its members did not always agree, they shared a collective will for the Theme to succeed in its objectives.

10 Cuts to Official Statistics

- 10.1 The meeting considered an update on plans by producers of official statistics for ceasing the production of statistics, and on public consultations relating to those statistics.
- 10.2 It was agreed that the Head of Assessment would examine the following two issues, with a view to informing a decision about whether or not a Statistical Expenditure Report was warranted:
- i. proposals by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to cease the publication of *Income Related Benefits: Estimates of Take Up*; and
 - ii. a decision by the Department for Health to cease publication of statistics relating to mortality and health.

Action: Head of Assessment to examine the case for a Statistical Expenditure Report with regards to *Income Related Benefits: Estimates of Take Up* published by DWP and statistics published by the Department for Health relating to mortality and health.

11 Any other business

There was no other business. The Committee would meet next on 13 November at 13:30 in London.

Committee for Official Statistics

Agenda

Tuesday, 11 September, 2012

Board Room, Drummond Gate, London, 10:30 - 13:00

Chair: Professor David Rhind

Apologies: None

1	Apologies, Minutes and Matters Arising	Meeting of 110612
2	Activities of the Government Statistical Service i. Implications for the GSS of Civil Service Reform ii. The National Statistician's Housing Market Review	SA(COS)(12)20 Ms Jil Matheson
3	The future of the National Statistics Publication Hub	SA(COS)(12)21 Mr Iain Bell
4	Monitoring Report: The Assessment of UK Official Statistics 2009 to 2012	SA(COS)(12)22 Mr Richard Alldritt
5	UK compliance with EU statistical legislation	SA(COS)(12)23 Mr Paul Jackson
6	Recording and dealing with breaches of the Code of Practice	SA(COS)(12)24 Ms Jil Matheson
7	Good Practice Team	Oral update Ms Jil Matheson and Mr Richard Alldritt
8	Developments with the National Statistics Theme Groups and an update from the Labour Market Statistics Theme	SA(COS)(12)25 Ms Pam Davies and Mr David Freeman
9	Draft Monitoring Brief: Statistics about the future	SA(COS)(12)26 Mr Richard Alldritt
10	Any other business	

**Next Meeting: Tuesday 13 November 2012,
Drummond Gate, London, 13:30 - 16:00**

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Committee for Official Statistics

SA(COS)(12)20

***Activities of the Government Statistical Service:
June 2012 to August 2012***

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Committee for Official Statistics with an update of Government Statistical Service (GSS) activities from June 2012 to August 2012.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) are invited to note the summary of GSS activities for this period.

Discussion

Open data and transparency

3. The Open Data White Paper “the Right to Data” was published in June 2012 based around three key themes, enhancing data access, building trust in public data and smarter use of data. The GSS has been steered initially by the GSS Transparency sub-group which was disbanded in June 2012. A Data Strategy Task and Finish Group has now been established to maintain momentum in this area. It is planned to prepare a paper about these issues for the next meeting.

Review of the National Statistician’s Guidance on Identifying Official Statistics

4. The National Statistician’s Guidance on Identifying Official Statistics has recently been reviewed in the light of experience since it was first published in February 2010. A small group of Heads of Profession (HoPs) was convened to look at the current guidance and suggest where its content might be improved. A revised version of the guidance has now been shared with the whole HoPs Group and the National Statistician. The main changes are highlighting the role of HoPs, reference to ad-hoc releases of statistics or statistical analysis, making explicit that data contained in Parliamentary Questions (PQs), Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and reports to select committees may include an official statistic and some practical advice on handling data treated as an official statistic. The approved guidance will shortly be disseminated across the GSS.

Review of arrangements for Arm’s Length Bodies

5. Guidance for HoPs on engaging with Arm’s Length Bodies (ALBs) was published following the recommendations from the ALB taskforce in June 2010. The National Statistician’s Office is carrying out a light touch review of the guidance via a survey of departments responsible for ALBs. It is planned to present the findings of the review to the Committee at their next meeting.

Civil Service Reform

6. The Civil Service Reform Plan was jointly published by the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude, and the Head of the Civil Service, Sir Bob Kerslake, on 19 June 2012. This action-focused plan was developed following wide-ranging consultation. The National Statistician has initiated work on the formulation of a strategy for implementing the Plan across the GSS. More information is contained

at **Annex A**.

Capability

7. Discussions are on-going with Civil Service Learning to develop an online learning curriculum for the Government Statistician Group (GSG) profession, which will link the elements of the new competence framework with appropriate learning activities (online and face-to-face) as outlined in the revised framework of statistical training. This will also dovetail with the generic Civil Service Competency Framework due to go live in April 2013, thus providing a one-stop shop for all the skills and competencies required of a government statistician.

GSG Fast Stream Recruitment

8. The second round from this year's scheme only produced five successful candidates, which was disappointing. Key reasons for this were the decision by Cabinet Office to bring forward their assessment centres by about a month owing to the Olympics, which then caused a clash with candidates' exam times; a massive reduction in their Fast Stream Marketing budget, and a perception expressed by candidates that the public sector was less favourable than the private sector in terms of job security. Other analytical professions have experienced similar difficulties. Meanwhile, departments are already making strong bids for the 2013 Scheme and an indicative requirement for 40 posts has been lodged with the Cabinet Office.

Statistical Officer Recruitment

9. The demand for statistical officer recruitment has not abated despite the recent running of recruitment schemes by the National Statistician's Office including a very successful assessment centre for the North East of England. More national recruitment schemes are being run over the next few months to meet the pent-up demand, with further local schemes out of London as required. Marketing spend has now been authorised to enable a wider applicant audience to be reached via national press, the Royal Statistical Society and social media sites. The shortage of higher-grade post applicants has led to some departments running their own campaigns for those positions with support from the National Statistician's Office (NSO).

Spending Review 2010 - Reporting on changes to statistical outputs

10. HoPs continue to be involved in responding to the challenges of the Spending Review 2010. They have been keeping the National Statistician informed as the impact of Spending Review 2010 (SR10) starts to affect the production of statistics, so that she, together with the Authority, can monitor the effects on official and national statistics. Item 10 on the agenda provides the usual update on the current position of cessations or changes to statistical outputs together with additional information now collected from HoPs on the impact of changes on statistical expenditure, quality and UK comparability.

International

11. The National Statistician is attending the Directors General of the National Statistical Institutes (DGINS) Conference in Prague on 24 to 26 September 2012. The two topics for this year's event are 'Meeting new needs on statistics for green economy' and 'Coordination of statistics and geospatial information'. The Conference will also include the 14th European Statistical Systems Committee (ESSC) meeting (agenda not currently available). She will also attend the High Level Group on Negative Priorities which coincides with DGINS.

SA(COS)(12)20 - Activities of the Government Statistical Service

12. Cross GSS consultation is essential for the EU regulatory agenda including a major revision to basic law for European Statistics; European Statistical System (ESS) five year work programme; demographic statistics for EU voting rights; and harmonisation of data and metadata exchange. There are no changes to report since the last COS meeting in June 2012.
13. Implications of the Government's Review of EU Competencies for the GSS are being analysed. A major piece of work is expected to ensue throughout 2013 in examining all EU statistical legislation and its impact.
14. The Audit Committee requested that COS familiarises itself with the risks of non-compliance with EU Regulations. Paper [SA(COS)(12)23] on the agenda of this meeting contains an update about the current UK position and the GSS processes for managing compliance issues.

Good Practice Team

15. The National Statistician and the Head of Assessment have decided to sponsor a six month pilot project starting from the beginning of October and running for six months. The project will involve the creation of a small team – the Good Practice Team – who will be commissioned to do some in-depth work supporting the GSS on improving commentary and user engagement. The team will be managed by Tim Andrews (Deputy Director in the National Statistician's Office) and report to a project board. Planning the set up and working of the team is at an early stage.

Breaches Guidance

16. Arrangements for reporting and dealing with breaches of the Code of Practice have recently been reviewed and it is intended to notify the GSS of the updated procedures in the near future. Breaches have been reported to the National Statistician since 2010 and her officials have considered, with the Assessment Team, what action, if any, to recommend that the Statistics Authority might take. It is proposed to clarify the guidance in the light of two years' operation. Paper [SA(COS)(12)24] on the agenda of this meeting provides more information about these plans.

National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics

17. A draft of the National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics was circulated via correspondence to members of COS on 15 August. While the intention was to publish this on 7 September, the timescale has now been extended. The same draft is reproduced at **Annex B** for information. Comments received from COS members are being considered and are not yet reflected in this draft.

National Statistician's Office, August 2012

List of Annexes

Annex A	Implications for the GSS of Civil Service Reform
Annex B	Draft National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics

Annex A Implications for the GSS of Civil Service Reform

Purpose

1. This paper sets out the Government's plans for Civil Service Reform, the detailed plan for which was recently published.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics are invited to note:
 - i. the Civil Service Reform plan itself; and
 - ii. initial plans for deciding upon an implementation strategy for the Government Statistical Service (GSS).

Discussion

3. The Civil Service Reform Plan was jointly published by the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude, and the Head of the Civil Service, Sir Bob Kerslake, on 19 June 2012. It sets out a series of specific actions for reform, which, when implemented, are intended to lead to real change for the Civil Service. It is the first stage of a continuing programme of reform. The plan will equip a smaller Civil Service to meet current and future challenges, including the demands of public sector reform and rising consumer expectations, as well as economic and financial challenges.
4. This action-focused plan was developed following wide-ranging consultation across the political spectrum, as well as with previous Permanent Secretaries, and those in the Civil Service itself. Many of the ideas in the plan were suggested by civil servants – including through the Tell Us How programme and staff surveys. As a result it is intended to make changes that civil servants themselves want to see, such as better performance management, a more corporate Civil Service, and more active career development.
5. Some elements of the plan will need to be implemented down through individual organisations. ONS is therefore considering how it will respond to the particular issues affecting it.
6. Many other elements are however much better addressed on a cross-cutting, civil service-wide basis. We have therefore considered what a GSS response to the plan should look like. There is a total of 17 actions in the plan that the NSO has categorised High/Medium/Low according to their relevance to the Government Statistical Service (Annex 1). Those in the first two categories include the following:
 - i. capabilities issues, including senior capability and for others, including the fast stream;
 - ii. data centres;
 - iii. management information, and the role of the GSS in departments;
 - iv. analysis / shared services;
 - v. digital by default;
 - vi. what works; and
 - vii. pay, including regional pay.
7. The National Statistician has proposed that the Heads of Profession Steering Group (HPSG) should help with the formulation of a strategy for implementing the Plan across the GSS and steer its progress. The views of HPSG members are currently being sought and it is planned to have an initial discussion at their next meeting on 13 September as a precursor to the preparation of a detailed plan by the NSO. More generally, the Heads of Profession Group will be asked for information about their own department's plans and the likely impact on the statistician community.

8. We have recently also participated in more detailed work to develop the five year capabilities plan, which is action 12 in chapter 4. We have reviewed and updated the Statistician Competence Framework so that it is a good fit with the emerging civil service generic competence framework.
9. We are also initiating a series of actions under the heading 'strengthening professions'. Of particular importance is improving talent management and succession planning to ensure that statisticians are more widely represented in the most senior grades.
10. There is also a new emphasis on 'professionalism', which is about how the work of professionals is used by others. Statisticians have a role here to raise awareness of the power of data and statistics for policy and operational delivery and to develop the numeracy skills of non-specialists.

National Statistician's Office, September 2012

List of Annexes

- Annex 1 List of Actions in Civil Service Reform Plan categorised as High/Medium/Low according to GSS interest**

Annex 1 List of Actions in Civil Service Reform Plan categorised as High/Medium/Low according to GSS interest

ACTIONS	GSS INTEREST H/M/L
Chapter 1: Clarifying the future size and shape of the Civil Service	
<p>Delivery models</p> <p>Action 1: Complete by October 2012 the review led by the Cabinet Office to identify some further examples of changes in delivery models which can be implemented in this Parliament, taking account of major departmental change programmes already underway. This review is focussing on operational and transactional services currently undertaken by in-house civil servants, examining mutual, commissioning and digital options.</p>	Low
<p>Digital</p> <p>Action 2: Departments to publish plans for making services Digital by Default by the end of 2012</p>	Medium
<p>Shared Services</p> <p>Action 3: Execute the current programme to create five centres for transactional services (i.e. finance, payroll, HR, procurement) creating the necessary infrastructure by the end of 2013, with full delivery of the programme by 2014, with potential cost savings of £600 million a year. We will execute the plans for seven shared communications hubs by the end of 2012.</p>	Medium
<p>Shared Services</p> <p>Action 4: Publish by October 2012 and execute by October 2013 plans to share a wide range of other services and expertise, including legal services, internal audit, programme and project management resources and commercial contracting procurement skills. Sharing services should become the norm and all departments should expect to share some of these services. Smaller departments should no longer expect to maintain full freestanding operations in all these functions. In addition, the Cabinet Office will lead work on how far some policy and analytical services could be provided on a shared basis, building on the example of the Behavioural Insights Team and the Shareholder Executive, which provide specialist advice to departments on a shared basis.</p>	High

Chapter 2: Improving policy making capability	
<p>Open policy making</p> <p>Action 5: Open policy making will become the default. Whitehall does not have a monopoly on policy making expertise. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a clear model of open policy making. • Pilot contestable policy making by establishing a centrally held match fund which can be used by Ministers to commission external policy development (for example, by academics and think tanks). 	Medium
<p>Ensuring resources match the Government's priorities</p> <p>Action 6: Ensure administrative resources match Government policy priorities. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work across Whitehall to address the sources of unnecessary activity and bureaucracy, drawing in part on snapshot reviews of Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and DWP on how departmental working time is spent. • Complete a zero-based budget review to identify the resources required to carry out the Department for Education's statutory and other functions going forward. This will include identifying a range of options for the future size, shape and role of the Department, without damaging its effectiveness, and whilst maintaining its focus on strategic priorities. The review will take account of reforms to the schools system, including the establishment of increasing numbers of Academies and Free Schools, and of the potential to benefit further from shared services. 	Low
<p>Improving policy making capability</p> <p>Action 7: We will ensure that staff have the skills and expertise they need to develop and implement policy, using up to date tools and techniques, and have clear understanding of what works in practice.</p>	High

Chapter 3: Implementing Policy	
<p>Improving delivery</p> <p>Action 8: Substantially improve delivery of major projects by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring greater testing and scrutiny of major projects by departmental boards and the Major Projects Authority before they move to full implementation; • Regular publication of project progress and the production of an annual report on progress, scrutinised by the Departmental Board; • Commencing training of all leaders of major projects through the Major Projects Leadership Academy by the end of 2014; and • Significantly reducing the turnover of Senior Responsible Officers (SROs). 	Low
<p>Management information</p> <p>Action 9: Put in place by October 2012 a robust cross-government Management Information (MI) system that enables departments to be held to account by their boards, Parliament, the public and the centre of Government.</p>	High
<p>Accountability</p> <p>Action 10: Sharpen and make more transparent the responsibility of Accounting Officers, including for ensuring effective implementation of major Government projects and programmes, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requiring explicit Accounting Officer sign off of implementation plans, major gateway reviews and Cabinet Committee papers; and • establishing the expectation that former Accounting Officers return to give evidence to Select Committees on a time limited basis where there is a clear rationale to do so. 	Low
<p>Accountability</p> <p>Action 11: In order to reflect Ministers accountability to Parliament for the performance of their departments, we will strengthen their role in both departmental and Permanent Secretary appointments.</p>	Low

Chapter 4: Building Capability	
<p>Skills, Learning and Development</p> <p>Action 12: We will produce, by the autumn, for the first time a five year capabilities plan for the whole Civil Service to identify which skills and capabilities are in deficit, and set out how gaps will be filled. In particular in a world where more services are commissioned from outside there is a serious need for many more civil servants to have commercial and contracting skills.</p>	High
<p>Developing and managing future leadership</p> <p>Action 13: Actively manage the Fast Stream, other high performers and the SCS as a government-wide corporate talent pool by expanding accelerated development programmes, and introducing a single common standard for promotion into and within the SCS; all by the end of 2012. Training for high potential Senior Civil Servants to be sourced on the open market through Civil Service Learning, and conducted alongside high potential individuals in other sectors, especially the private sector.</p>	High
<p>Developing and managing future leadership</p> <p>Action 14: Increase dynamism and flexibility by making it easier for staff at all levels to move between the Civil Service and the private sector.</p>	Low

Chapter 5: Creating a modern employment offer...	
<p>Permanent Secretary experience</p> <p>Action 15:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the expectation that Permanent Secretaries appointed to the main delivery departments will have had at least two years experience in a commercial or operational role. • Move over time towards a position where there is a more equal balance between those departmental Permanent Secretaries who have had a career primarily in operational management and those whose career has been primarily in policy advice and development. 	Medium
<p>Departmental capability</p> <p>Action 16: We will replace existing Capability Reviews with departmental improvement plans, which will be annually assessed and led by departmental boards, calling on other external advice.</p>	Low
<p>Modern employment offer</p> <p>Action 17: Creating a positive offer for staff: the views of staff will be sought on a new offer for civil servants that encompasses a much less hierarchical, pacier culture focussed on outcomes not process, supporting innovation and rewarding initiative. The new offer will embrace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms and conditions of employment that reflect good, modern practice in the wider public and private sector; • For the SCS, a proposal on reward to be submitted to Senior Salaries Review Board in the autumn for implementation in 2013 to include consideration of a voluntary “earn-back” scheme. The new offer will be put in place by 2013; • Regular and rigorous performance appraisal for all staff, recognising good performance and taking action where performance is poor; • At least five days a year investment in targeted learning and development; and • Creating a decent working environment for all staff, with modern workplaces enabling flexible working, substantially improving IT tools and streamlining security requirements to be less burdensome for staff. 	Medium
<p>Modern employment offer</p> <p>Action 18: Drive the culture and behaviours being sought through the new competence framework that sets out the behaviours civil servants need to demonstrate.</p>	Low

Annex B National Statistician's Review of Housing Market Statistics

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this Document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-reviews/national-statistician-s-review-of-official-housing-market-statistics.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Committee for Official Statistics

SA(COS)(12)21

The future of the National Statistics Publication Hub

Purpose

1. This note covers the future of the Publication Hub - Options analysis. All UK Government Departments other than ONS and devolved administrations will be migrating to www.gov.uk. Alongside this, the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Presentation and Dissemination Committee had been reviewing the Publication Hub and how the two developments link together. This paper focuses solely on the Publication Schedule and the options for the future of this. There are three options:
 - i. continue with the existing Publication Hub as is;
 - ii. ask the Government Digital Service (GDS) to develop the Publication Schedule with a view to replacing the Publication Hub as soon as possible; or
 - iii. the Authority request ONS to develop a replacement for the Publication Hub.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) are asked to agree that the GSS:
 - i. explore options with the Government Digital Service for a replacement to the Publication Hub building in sufficient independence from Ministerial content. We can maintain the existing solution as a fallback; and
 - ii. receive further reports on progress. Once sufficient exploration of the options has taken place then any final proposal would be submitted to the Authority Board for approval.

Discussion

Background - the move to www.gov.uk

3. As part of the Government's commitments to reducing costs on Information Technology (IT) spend it has announced that all internet publications made by Government Departments will be migrated to www.gov.uk in two tranches: a leading group of five Departments by end of November 2012 and all Ministerial Departments by the end of March 2013. The project is being run by GDS. This includes statistical content produced by Ministerial Departments of the UK Government. GDS have so far been very willing to work with the GSS to meet our needs.
4. As part of the ongoing dialogue with GDS, the GSS have set up a group to work with GDS and ensure that our needs are met. The key assurances we are seeking are:
 - i. that statistical content will be separated from political material and be accessible from the front page (for many Government Departments this will be an improvement on the current situation);
 - ii. that statistical content can only be approved by the Statistical Head of Profession or an approved deputy; and
 - iii. that the site is capable of publishing time critical content (GDS assure us they can as they have other time critical content such as Budget announcements which have the same degree of criticality).

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5. The Authority currently has an exemption from the migration to www.gov.uk for all its websites (the Authority website, the ONS website, the Publication Hub, Neighbourhood Statistics and NOMIS). In addition the project does not cover devolved administrations.
6. So far GDS have been willing to work with us to design in the safeguards we need to protect the independence of the statistics. A full specification is being drawn up to ensure that the GDS does meet GSS needs for the publication of first releases in detail. This will include the ability to include basic visualisations.
7. The GDS will not be able, for the foreseeable future, to meet the following capabilities:
 - i. development and maintenance of Application Programming Interface (API);
 - ii. more complex visualisations than basic google-embedded ones; and
 - iii. tabulation tool style services such as Neighbourhood Statistics and NOMIS.

Background – the Publication Hub

8. The Publication Hub is the place where all National and Official Statistics release dates are pre-announced and acts as a link through to all statistics published in the UK which are published on the ONS website, Departmental websites, or websites of the Devolved Administrations. In addition it has some content pages.
9. This was developed in response to Ministerial commitments by John Healey, the then Financial Secretary to the Treasury, during the passage and Statistics and Registration Act 2007 and went live on 1 April 2008.
10. The GSS Presentation and Dissemination Committee was asked to review and redevelop the Publication Hub in 2011. The review process identified the following.
 - i. Users were dissatisfied with the publication hub – a survey of users in 2011 found that 28 per cent of users were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied and that 35 per cent did not find what they were looking for. One of the main reasons for the dissatisfaction is that people want the statistics and the publication schedule on the same site.
 - ii. Statistical suppliers, particularly those outside of ONS have difficulty accessing the technology with many relying on ad hoc solutions. In addition the technology is cumbersome and resource intensive.
 - iii. The content pages of the Publication Hub were not well maintained because of these access difficulties (among other reasons) meaning that the statistical content that is present is often very out of date.
 - iv. Modern open data standards could be developed quickly and easily to maintain a more agile Publication schedule, which would also allow others to use the data.
11. The move of most Government Departments to www.gov.uk and the need identified by the Presentation and Dissemination Committee to improve the Publication Hub has raised the question of how we replace the Publication Hub and whether the GDS could deliver the solution for us. The GDS have assured us they would have the capability to deliver the functionality of the publication hub.

Option Appraisal

12. There are three options
 - A. continue with the existing Publication Hub as is;

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- B. ask the GDS to develop the Publication Schedule with a view to replacing the Publication Hub as soon as possible; and
 - C. the Authority request ONS to develop a replacement for the Publication Hub
13. In order to assess these options, a set of criteria have been developed to illustrate the various options and each option has been scored against these options on a 0-3 rating. The criteria are:
- i. User experience (0 - poor user experience, 3 - fully meets user needs);
 - ii. Perception of independence (0 - not perceived as presenting independent statistics; 3 - perceived as fully independent);
 - iii. Ability of solution to comply with the Code of Practice (0 - non-compliant with several aspects of the Code, 3 - enables full compliance with the Code);
 - iv. Open Data Standards (0 - no open data, 3 - full 5 star open data);
 - v. ease of use by suppliers (0 - not easily maintained and updated; 3 easily maintained and updated); and
 - vi. Cost to Authority (0 - expenditure of more than £100,000, 3 - no cost).

	Option A - do nothing	Option B - GDS	Option C - new solution
User experience	1	3	3
Perception of independence	3	1	3
Code of Practice Compliance	2	3	3
Open Data	0	3	3
Supplier use	1	3	3
Cost	3	3	1
Total	10	16	16

NB - where current capability is not fully known it is assumed that this will be designed into new builds. From current discussions with GDS this appears a safe assumption.

14. These scores are mainly present to illustrate that the do nothing option is the least desirable for a number of reasons:
- i. difficulty of use by suppliers which often leads to code of practice non-compliance;
 - ii. lack of use of Open Data; and
 - iii. the current poor user experience on the publication hub.
15. All of these can be designed into a replacement system whether designed by the GDS or a newly developed GSS system.
16. It is also important to understand the strength of feeling within the GSS that the

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Publication Hub in its current format is a resource intensive overhead. Several departments cannot even access the IT system required to update it and ONS have to carry out the function on the Department's behalf.

17. If it is agreed that a replacement for the Publication Hub is necessary, then the main decision is whether to develop a new system and invest resources in this or to ask the GDS to develop the replacement of the Publication Hub.
18. This appears to be a direct trade-off between the arguments around perception of independence and the cost of developing a new system.
19. GDS would be very willing to work with us to design in as much independence as possible into a Publication Hub replacement to ensure that it met our needs in this respect. Given that the GDS solution is funded already and that we still have the opportunity to work with them to further develop aspects of independence which concern us, then there is no risk to the GSS to continue to design the GDS solution as we have the existing Publication Hub as back-up if we decide the GDS solution will not give sufficient assurance of independence.
20. Under this scenario the final decision to move from the Publication Hub should be taken by the Authority Board following full consultation with the GSS and further design work .

Iain Bell, Office for National Statistics, September 2012

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

SA(COS)(12)22

The Assessment of UK Official Statistics 2009 to 2012

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/reports/the-assessment-of-uk-official-statistics-2009-12.pdf>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(12)23

GSS compliance with European Union statistical legislation

Purpose

1. The Audit Committee requested at its meeting of 2 July that the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) examine the issue of UK compliance with EU statistical legislation. The Audit Committee requested that assurance be provided around the risks of non-compliance and the management of these risks across the Government Statistical Service (GSS).

Recommendations

2. Members of COS are invited to consider the details of this paper and comment/advise on additional steps that may be required to ensure that compliance issues are being managed effectively.

Discussion

3. EU regulations determine the nature of many GSS outputs, production and dissemination processes. A lack of compliance could lead to infraction proceedings against the UK government by the European Commission (EC). This could result in substantial financial penalties. A lack of compliance could in itself also affect the UK's ability to effectively influence overall statistical developments within the European Statistical System (ESS).
4. There are around 300 European statistical laws. Some are 'framework' and cross cutting (such as legislation on metadata transmission, and for independence and quality). Others are specific to the delivery of particular statistics, and others are laws amending previous ones. Current GSS compliance monitoring is based on a group of around 50 ESS statistical 'themes'. Each theme may have multiple data requirements defined by various specific or cross-cutting regulations. A list of these themes and the lead GSS departments is at **Annex C**.
5. 'Infraction' is the legal process by which the EC takes a Member State to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) for a breach of its legal obligations. The stages are, in order of escalation:
 - i. pre-infraction correspondence (between the National Statistician and EC in the case of statistics);
 - ii. commission's letter of inquiry;
 - iii. commission's letter of notice;
 - iv. issue of the Commission's 'reasoned opinion' about compliance;
 - v. Member State's response; and
 - vi. application to the ECJ for a ruling, and fines.
6. To date there have been no infraction proceedings completed against the UK or any other Member State on a statistical matter. But the UK, along with other Member States, has had formal pre-infraction correspondence with the EC on compliance issues. The UK has avoided the more serious stages by cooperating with the Commission, addressing the concerns raised and working towards agreed solutions.

7. Infraction fines are rare across all European legislation. Any reasonable effort to work towards compliance has so far been enough to change the formal procedure from infraction to 'improvement actions'. The extent of any fines would be determined by the ECJ as financial penalties for non-compliance are not normally explicitly set out in regulations. But there is little if any case law to guide us as to the potential size and effect of fines. A Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) consultation paper on infractions in 2011 advised Local and Public Authorities that an infraction fine would be made up of a minimum lump sum of £10 million, plus a substantial daily fine of thousands of pounds for any continued non-compliance.
8. A recent regulation, applicable to Eurozone members only, may be indicative of the upper limit of future financial penalties for non-compliance, and an increased assertiveness of the Commission in ensuring compliance in key areas. It explicitly sets out the mechanism the ECJ may use to determine financial penalties for the manipulation of debt and deficit statistics. In these circumstances, a fine of 0.2 per cent of the GDP of the offending Member State is stipulated. This could be reduced according to mitigating factors, such as the willingness to rectify the failure, minimising its duration, and positive cooperation with Eurostat. This mechanism may be taken into account by the ECJ when considering fines in other areas.
9. Technically, infraction fines are payable by the UK government. It is very likely though that the department causing the infraction will be expected to pay the fine – the DCLG paper for instance states that the relevant local authority is liable.
10. However, current EU financial and political issues are driving both the initiation of a number of new regulations that might prove challenging for the GSS and an enhanced focus of the Commission on compliance with existing legislation, and in particular on statistics deemed crucial to the resolution of these issues.
11. Infraction proceedings aside, if the UK did not manage compliance issues effectively then there could be significant non-financial costs. Firstly, the Commission could withdraw concessions to UK interests in the negotiation of related and unrelated regulations. Secondly, deterioration in the working relationship between the Commission and the GSS would decrease our ability to influence more broadly in the ESS, where 'soft' power can be crucial to ensuring beneficial outcomes.
12. Changes underway to the basic European statistical law (Reg 223/2009) will remove 'lack of budget' as mitigation for non-compliance. Proposals for the reform of 223/2009 will make it a legal obligation for Member States to provide adequate resources for European statistics obligations.
13. The functions and context of the ESS and the regulatory process are explained in more detail at **Annex A**.

Current GSS processes for managing compliance issues

14. There are two main phases where the GSS, overseen by the GSS International Committee (GSSIC), manages the risks of non-compliance.
 - Pre-enactment of legislation. As regulations develop through the various levels of the ESS (see **Annex B**), GSS representatives attempt to ensure that legal requirements are not enacted that are likely to lead to non-compliance. This requires strong coordination of domestic actors throughout the negotiation processes (including with HM Treasury and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), as well as across the GSS and the Devolved Administrations in

particular), strong coordination with other Member States, adequate training for GSS representatives, and effective dialogue with Eurostat (the Commission's statistical authority).

- Post-enactment of legislation. On a quarterly basis, GSSIC asks all GSS departments to report on departmental compliance issues. This helps to identify problem areas, encourage departments to produce plans to overcome the problems, and monitor progress on a continuous basis. Issues may also be escalated to the National Statistician where necessary, who also receives a separate quarterly brief on compliance issues. Constructive relationships and dialogue with Eurostat are essential in managing any potential problem areas.

15. Where compliance issues relate to the challenges of producing aggregate UK figures, these are escalated to the GSS Inter-Administration Committee (IAC).

16. ONS Legal Services and the National Statistician's Office collaborate to provide:

- i. thorough scrutiny of emerging legislation;
- ii. cross-GSS consultation and coordination with other Member States;
- iii. briefing to FCO, Cabinet Office, European Statistical Committees, MEPs, etc; and
- iv. advice and tools (such as documentation management and training) for the GSS.

Current compliance concerns and how they are being managed

17. The Director General of Eurostat writes formally on an annual basis to the Heads of National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) to highlight areas of compliance of most concern to the Commission ('pre-infraction correspondence'). The latest letter in November 2011 highlighted three areas of non-compliance in the UK: 'Carriage of goods by road', 'National Accounts,' and 'Migration statistics' – making them our highest priority in terms of remedial action. There is also a fourth priority area of concern identified by the GSS International Committee (GSSIC): 'Public health and health and safety at work statistics'. More information about these issues is in Annex C.

18. There are a number of proposed regulations, currently under negotiation, that may create risks of non-compliance depending on the success of our pre-enactment risk management activities. In the case of the new updating regulation for National Accounts (ESA 2010), additional legal requirements to those under ESA1995 are extensive. Compliance will only be assured if adequate additional resources and planning are in place – an issue which will be brought to the attention of the ONS Board.

19. As already considered by the Authority Board in May [SA(12)20], the reform to the basic law for European Statistics (223/2009) focuses on four key areas. These are: the coordinating role of the National Statistics Institute (NSI), the role of the Head of the NSI, producing 'Commitments on Confidence' (about the quality of European Statistics produced at the national level, with improvement actions), and enhanced access to administrative data. It is the latter proposal which may cause compliance issues for the UK; the rest being unlikely to cause problems or broadly in line with the current UK system.

20. In general, the vision for European Statistics implies a greater number of forthcoming cross-cutting regulations that aim to implement integrated systems. To avoid significant future compliance issues, the GSS will need to ensure that each department is able to adapt internal production systems for compliance with cross-EU standards (e.g.

computer systems allowing for common standards in the exchange of data and metadata).

21. Both Eurostat and Member States are keen to identify 'negative priorities' in European Statistics. This could lead to a reduction in regulatory requirements. However, it is proving challenging to achieve consensus on those statistical outputs that could be dropped or on the means to produce certain statistics more efficiently. In any case, the political and economic crisis is expected to drive even greater demands for statistical information from EU-level users than could be off-set by these sorts of reductions. Securing adequate resources for compliance with new demands may therefore be important.

International Relations Team, National Statistician's Office, 5 September 2012

List of annexes

- Annex A The functions and context of the European Statistical System (ESS) and regulatory processes**
- Annex B The various groups through which draft regulations are negotiated**
- Annex C EU regulatory themes and lead GSS departments**

Annex A The functions and context of the European Statistical System (ESS) and regulatory processes

1. Since the early days of the Community it was realised that decisions on and the planning and implementation of Community policies must be based on reliable and comparable statistics. So the ESS was built up gradually with the objective of providing comparable statistics at EU level.
2. The ESS is the partnership between the Community statistical authority, which is the Commission (Eurostat), the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs), and other national authorities responsible in each Member State for the development, production and dissemination of 'European statistics' (i.e. those determined by EU regulations and other agreements). This partnership also includes the European Economic Area (EEA) and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries (Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, Liechtenstein). The concept of 'partnership' is crucial to the operation of the system, and as far as possible conflict is minimised and decisions are consensual. As with other international networks in which the GSS is active, there is a culture of mutual support. Relationships can often be more important than procedures in securing beneficial outcomes for the UK.
3. The ESS functions as a network in which Eurostat's role is to lead the harmonisation of statistics in close cooperation with the national statistical authorities. ESS work concentrates mainly on EU policy areas - but, with the extension of EU policies, harmonisation has been extended to nearly all statistical fields. Statistical production within the ESS is governed by the European Statistics Code of Practice, which is closely aligned to that of the UK.
4. As set out in EU treaties, the Commission (Eurostat in the case of the ESS) has the sole right of initiation of policies and regulations. However, Annex B details the various groups through which draft regulations are negotiated and where GSS members and other Member States can exert substantial influence on the shape of regulations and overall strategy.
5. The UK Government and Parliament, along with the European Parliament, are also involved in the regulatory process. In practice however the GSS operates with independence and the independent role of Heads of NSIs (i.e. the National Statistician in the UK), as a legal representative of all national statistical authorities in any Member State, is enshrined in EU law. With certain types of regulations however, FCO, and ultimately the Chancellor through his seat at the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN), have final voting rights in Council despite decisive GSS involvement at lower levels. To date, direct political influence on outcomes has been negligible in the UK case.
6. While the needs of users at the EU level drive much of Eurostat's legislative agenda, the 'vision' for European statistics is also influential. The vision looks to move away from the traditional way of producing statistics in silos, or 'stovepipes', to a more integrated production model. The current stovepipe production model is seen as not well adapted to collecting data on phenomena that cover multiple dimensions, such as climate change or globalisation. The current model is also seen as costly and less efficient, as it does not make use of standardisation between areas and collaboration between Member States. By avoiding duplication of work, Eurostat and the NSIs should increase efficiency, reduce burden on respondents and cut the cost of compiling statistics. Another important element is to better understand and respond to user needs. For many users statistical information is abstract and the more complex

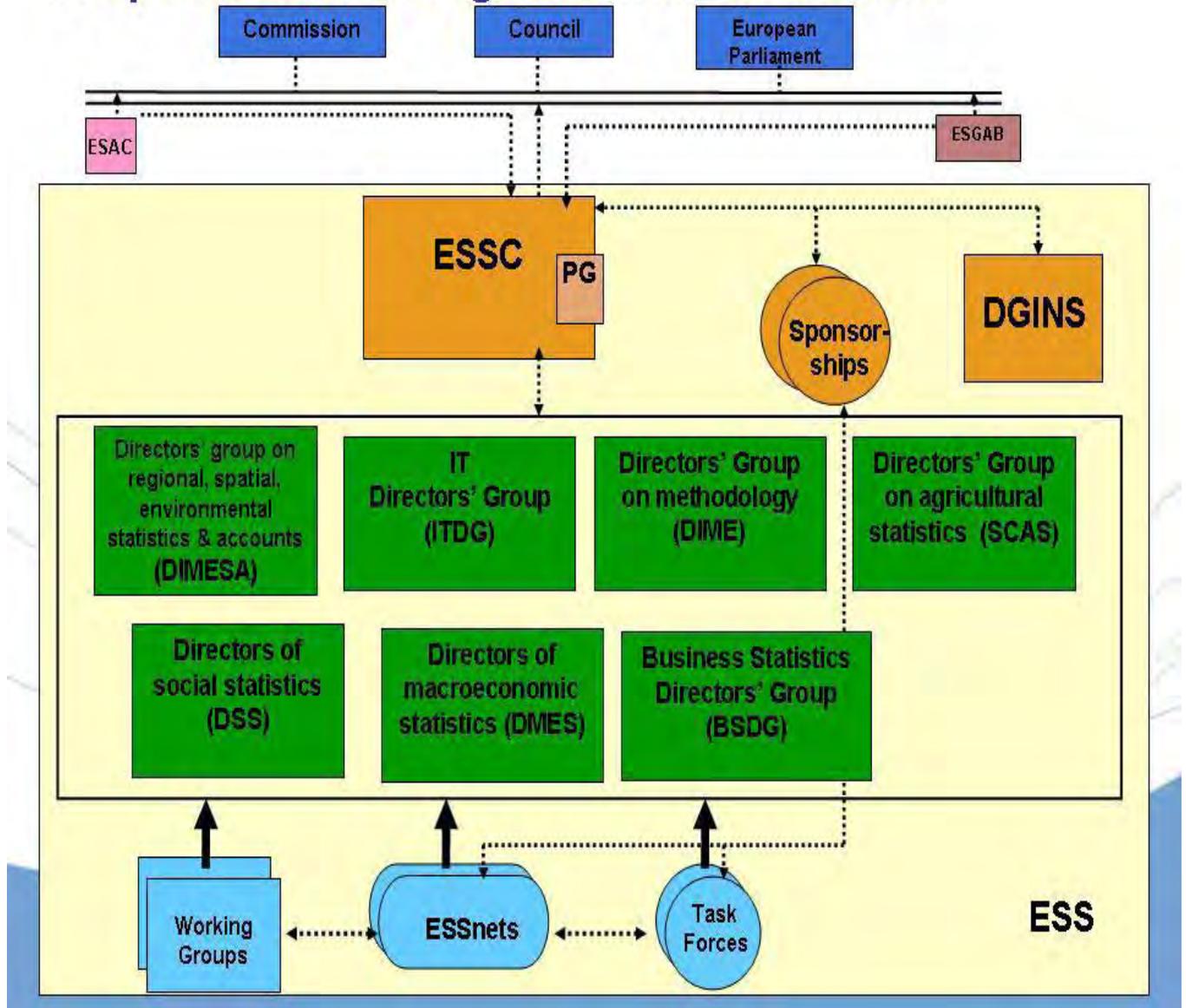
the production and methodologies become, the more it is necessary to explain the results. New ways of communicating with users will therefore also be explored.

7. The wider push for efficiencies in the EU is also driving a number of important changes to the regulatory environment. This means that more regulations will be 'fast-tracked' by greater use of existing regulatory instruments that allow for by-passing what can be protracted 'Co-Decision' negotiations at the level of the Council and European Parliament (the latter traditionally being a source of extra demands). There is now also a greater focus on cross-cutting regulations which determine the production framework rather than specific statistical outputs, such as setting standards for data and meta-data exchange – the impacts therefore being GSS-wide.
8. Also, new pseudo-legal instruments are being developed called 'ESS Agreements'. These will also be used for avoiding lengthy Co-Decision procedures and will relate to more specific statistical requirements. The legal implications of these 'agreements' in terms of compliance issues are not yet clear. The UK along with some other Member States is withholding full support for ESS Agreements until this is resolved. In general though, given adequate action and coordination by Member States, these regulatory developments offer significant opportunities for Member States in the negotiation phase to limit requirements that may cause future compliance difficulties. They are likely to replace current 'Gentleman's Agreements', under which Member States provide data 'voluntarily' without risk of infraction.
9. The ESS is not just a regulatory system. International cooperation in general can bring many benefits for the UK statistical system. For example: influencing international statistical developments that affect us, collaborating to solve common challenges, learning from others, opportunities for development of GSS staff, ensuring harmonised and comparable statistics, and opportunities to exploit synergies to maximise efficiency. The UK's membership of the European ESS is perhaps the most important route to realising such benefits, particularly given our level of economical and geographical integration with the EU.

Annex B The various groups through which draft regulations are negotiated

These groups are where GSS members and other Member States can exert significant influence on the shape of regulations and overall strategy.

Proposed future Organisation of the ESS



NB: The 'proposed future organisation' is a simplified version of the current system aimed at increasing efficiency in decision-making. The fundamental structure is the same.

Annex C EU regulatory themes and lead GSS departments

DOMAINS AND THEMES	LEAD
Domain 1 – Demographic and social statistics	
Theme: Population	ONS
• Demography, census and projections	ONS
• Migration and Asylum	ONS/HO
Theme: Labour market	ONS
Theme: Education and lifelong learning	DCSF
Theme: Culture	DCMS
Theme: Health and safety	HSE
Theme: Distribution of incomes and living conditions	ONS
Theme: Social protection	ONS
Theme: Food safety	FSA
Theme: Crime and criminal justice	ONS
Theme: Discrimination	HO
Theme: Other work in the field of demographic and social statistics	ONS
Domain 2 – Macroeconomic statistics	
Theme: Annual economic accounts	ONS
Theme: Quarterly accounts	ONS
Theme: Monetary and financial statistics	ONS
Theme: Government finance statistics	ONS
Theme: Monitoring own resources	ONS
Theme: Prices	ONS
Theme: Trade in goods	HMRC
Theme: Trade in services and balance of payments	HMRC/ONS
Domain 3 – Business statistics	
Theme: Annual business statistics	ONS
Theme: Short-term business statistics	ONS
Theme: Energy	DECC
Theme: Transport	DfT
Theme: Tourism	ONS/DCMS
Theme: Business registers	ONS
Domain 4 – Statistics on agriculture, forestry and fisheries	
Theme: Agricultural statistics	Defra
Theme: Agricultural structures	Defra
Theme: Land use and land cover	Defra
Theme: Agricultural accounts and prices	Defra
Theme: Forestry statistics	Forestry
Theme: Fisheries statistics	Defra
Theme: Agri-environmental statistics	Defra
Theme: Rural development and maritime policy statistics	Defra
Domain 5 – Multi-domain statistics	
Theme: Statistics for business cycle analysis	ONS
Theme: Europe 2020 strategy and sustainable development	ONS
Theme: Environment statistics and accounts	Defra/ONS
Theme: Regional and urban statistics	ONS
Theme: Geographical and local information	ONS
Theme: Statistics on science and technology	BIS
Theme: Information society	ONS
Domain 6 – Support for statistical outputs	
Theme: Quality, evaluation, statistical coordination and classifications	ONS
Theme: Data security and statistical confidentiality	ONS
Domain 8 – Policy strategy and coordination	
Theme: Legal aspects of confidentiality	ONS

NB: there are over 100 'modules' or sub-themes underpinning the main 'themes'. There are over 300 separate cross-cutting or theme-specific legal acts from which the data requirements for each module are derived.

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(12)24

Recording and Dealing with Breaches of the Code of Practice

Purpose

1. This paper proposes revised arrangements for reporting and dealing with breaches of the Code of Practice.

Recommendations

2. The Committee for Official Statistics is invited to agree:
 - the updated procedures for reporting and dealing with breaches of the Code of Practice; and
 - publication and promotion of guidance outlining the updated process, including circulation to the Government Statistical Service (GSS) (**Annex A**).

Discussion

3. The Code of Practice (Protocol 2, Practice 8) requires some breaches (related to the inappropriate release of statistics before their publication) to be reported to the National Statistician. By implication, other breaches should be reported, but there is no clear requirement to do so.
4. Since 2010, breaches have been reported to the National Statistician, and her staff have considered, with the Assessment team, what action, if any, to recommend that the Statistics Authority might take. In the light of two years' operation of the guidelines, we propose improving them to clarify:
 - i. the importance of producer bodies dealing with breaches, including reporting them to the Statistics Authority;
 - ii. which breaches should be reported;
 - iii. who is responsible for reporting breaches; and
 - iv. what information about breaches should be reported to the Statistics Authority.

Tim Andrews, National Statistician's Office

Mark Pont, Monitoring and Assessment Team

September 2012

List of Annexes

Annex A Draft guidance to producers of official statistics about reporting breaches of the Code of Practice

Annex A Guidance to producers of official statistics about reporting breaches of the Code of Practice

Guidance for reporting breaches of the Code of Practice is published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this information go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SA(COS)(12)25

Developments with the National Statistics Themes

Purpose

1. This note describes current work to re-energise the National Statistics Theme Groups, with the aim of improving the coordination of statistical activity across departments.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Committee for Official Statistics (COS) are invited to note and comment on the plans to re-energise the National Statistics Theme Groups

Discussion

3. The current theme structure was created in 2009. Themes are organised by subject matter area or topic, and bring together statistical producers for a given topic. A list of the current themes is provided at **Annex A**.
4. Themes were designed to:
 - i. lead on long-term statistical strategy and planning;
 - ii. identify and influence statistical development and innovation; and
 - iii. engage with relevant user organisations to identify priorities, gaps and other significant issues.
5. Although there are standard theme roles and responsibilities, some themes are more effective than others. While many themes fully meet the original remit, for some it has proved difficult to provide a strong lead on long-term strategic planning, given that it remains for Ministers to determine their departmental, and therefore statistical, priorities and work programmes. Coordination is made more difficult in those themes that bring together a wide or varied mix of outputs and / or departments who contribute to the subject matter area.
6. It has also proved challenging to make the most of the theme groups in overall statistical planning and priority setting across the Government Statistical Service (GSS).
7. We are reviewing and refreshing the way themes operate to ensure that we make the most of this strong network and so that the practices of the best are applied by all.
8. A recent workshop of theme leaders confirmed the value of a strong cross-GSS network. The group confirmed that this network was essential to ensure effective coordination of statistics across departments. Theme leaders also agreed that there was a need for more discussion of cross-theme issues, as well as to improve cross-GSS planning and priority setting.
9. Four drivers for cross-departmental planning and collaboration were identified:
 - i. to identify the statistical infrastructure, or the 'statistics the UK needs';
 - ii. for improved user engagement – users tell us that they prefer to discuss issues on a topic, rather than a departmental, basis;
 - iii. to respond to strengthened coordination of legislation and compliance at European level; and
 - iv. for efficiency, through shared resources, harmonisation and minimisation of duplication etc.

10. Theme leaders agreed that there was a need to review and update the terms of reference for theme groups, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the theme leaders. We are also developing plans for how we might better support cross-theme working, to improve the coordination of statistical planning etc across the GSS.
11. The majority of themes leaders confirmed that they were content with the scope of their theme, and considered that their theme was well-placed to meet the expectations of them. However, for some themes, the wide and disparate set of statistics that were brought together within the theme made it difficult to plan across the theme. It was agreed that a review of the scope of some themes was necessary. Changes following this review might lead to a small increase in the number of themes, from the current eleven themes, to perhaps twelve or thirteen.
12. Another issue raised by theme leaders concerned the difficulty for them in driving through improvements within their theme, in departments or in devolved organisations where they have no direct control and only limited influence. The National Statistician's Office is considering what arrangements need to be put in place to support theme leaders, and to influence more strongly the statistical plans within departments.
13. It is anticipated that the review of themes will be completed during the autumn, and that new arrangements will be in place before the end of 2012. There is clearly a commitment from theme leaders to improve the effectiveness of the current theme structure so we expect that high level cross-GSS that statistical planning and prioritisation will be more joined up in the future.
14. An update on the work of the Labour Market Statistics Theme is at **Annex B**, for information. This update was recently provided to the GSS Inter-Administration Committee.

Pam Davies, National Statistician's Office, September 2012

List of Annexes

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Annex A | List of current National Statistics themes |
| Annex B | Update from the Labour Market Statistics Theme |

Annex A List of current National Statistics themes

Crime and Justice

Health and Social Care

Government

Agriculture and Environment

Economy

Children, Education and Schools

Labour Market

People and Places

Population

Business and Energy

Travel and Transport

Annex B Update from the Labour Market Statistics Theme

Title of theme:	Labour Market	Theme Leader:	Ole Black	Date:	May 2012
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Topic	Specific Areas of Interest	Theme Leader Response
1. Comparability of Statistics Between the Four Countries.	1a. Successes in the area of inter-country comparability that may have wider application across the GSS.	ONS have produced a method for producing statistics on people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) from the Labour Force Survey that has been agreed by the Department for Education (DfE), Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Devolved Administrations (DAs).
	1b. Barriers to the inter-country comparability of statistics.	Ethnicity classifications: Following the development of the questions for the Census, different classifications for ethnicity are being used for the Labour Force Survey (LFS) from January 2011 in Scotland to other parts of the UK. For comparing data across devolved administrations data are aggregated.
	1c. Other inter-country comparability issues (positive or negative), including those identified via the assessment process.	When the NEETs figures for the UK are published using LFS data, Scotland would like equivalent figures for English regions and the devolved administrations to be produced at the same time. Due to the relatively small sample sizes these estimates would not be National Statistics. The NS estimates for NEETs below the UK level would be from the APS or administrative data. However, Wales are opposed to the publication of these estimates as they feel it could lead to confusion with the existing measures. A paper is being sent to the IAC to attempt to resolve the matter.
2. User Engagement Activity	2a. Theme's understanding of user needs with an inter-country or UK element.	At each theme group meeting there is an item devoted to policy needs and emerging user needs for discussion which allows inter country elements to be discussed
	2b. Examples of user engagement (both positive and negative), including those with an inter-country or UK element.	The Labour Market Statistics User Group have held meetings in November (on Regional Labour Market Statistics) and March, the latter being in the form of a day long conference. A User Survey for the Labour Market Statistical Bulletin will be launched in May. Results will be used to assess how the current format can be improved to better meet user needs. Bilaterals - ONS has continued to meet regularly (quarterly or biannually) with the key users of Labour Market Statistics
3. Issues/Risks	3a. Issues or risks that cut across Themes, topics, departments or administrations that may	From October 2013, Universal Credit will start to replace the current means tested benefits, including Jobseekers' Allowance. ONS are working closely with the

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	<p>require shared consideration or governance.</p>	<p>Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to develop a replacement for the current JSA based claimant count series and the other out of work benefits included in the current Labour Market release.</p> <p>Funding for Annual Population Survey boost surveys – Following the most recent spending review, the devolved administrations have agreed to continue to fund the APS boosts. However, at least for 2012/13 the DA's have decided to freeze their current funding for the APS boost samples and not increase the funding by the annually agreed Treasury uplift to account for inflation. ONS has worked with the DAs to agree lower sample allocations and targets to account for this freeze in funding. The reductions were implemented to maintain quality for the lower funding in real terms. ONS is now investigating ways to introduce further efficiency savings on the boost surveys e.g. using the new Address Base as a more efficient sampling frame. Hopefully this will allow the boost samples to be increased to their current levels in future years and/or allow the DA's to continue to freeze their funding without having to reduce the sample sizes further.</p> <p>Quality assurance of analysis – To ensure quality and consistency ONS and the other members of the Theme Group, are working together to quality assure ad-hoc analysis. This is being handled on a QA rather than pre-release basis.</p>
<p>4. Other Topics</p>	<p>4a. Structure of Theme and ways of working, e.g. Theme groups, standardised user/DA engagement etc.</p> <p>4b. International issues relating to the Theme that may have an impact on the devolved administrations or on future GSS strategies.</p>	<p>The Labour Market Theme Group is a dynamic group that builds on the foundations of the previous topic group. There are two scheduled meetings a year, in May and November, which are well attended and always generate a lot of discussion and debate. The group is chaired by ONS and the membership consists of representatives from BIS, DWP, HM Treasury, the Bank of England, Low Pay Commission, HM Revenue and Customs, the Welsh Government, the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Northern Ireland and Scottish Government.</p> <p>In the last year, the meetings have moved from face-to-face to teleconference. This has allowed the level of attendance to continue while reducing costs, particularly for those who have to travel long distances (e.g. representatives from Scotland and Northern Ireland).</p> <p>The Eurostat Labour Market Assessment Group (LAMAS) is considering its impact of the European Vision in Labour Market statistics. Developments will be shared with LAMAS with first discussion in the May meeting.</p>

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

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Monitoring Brief – Statistics about the future

This document has been published on the UK Statistics Authority website.

To see this document go to:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/monitoring-review-9-2012---projections-and-forecasts-as-official-statistics.pdf>